

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission

DATE, TIME AND

PLACE OF MEETING:

Wednesday, September 26, 2001 8:00 a.m., Room 106, County-City Building, 555 S 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS AND OTHERS

IN ATTENDANCE:

Members: V.J. Nelson, Thomas Laging, Kim Todd, David Hunter, Patrick O'Donnell, and Karen Kilgarin

Others: Bob Ripley, Ken Fougerson (State Staff), Chris Turner, Frank Jacobson, and David Unick (UNL - College of Architecture), Steve Schwab, Jerry Shorney, and Mark Canney (Parks & Recreation), Dallas McGee (Urban Development), Eileen Bergt and Robert Hensarling (UNL - Landscape Services), Ed Zimmer and Missy Minner (Planning Dept)

STATED PURPOSE

OF THE MEETING:

Regular Meeting of the Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission

Acting Chair Laging called the meeting to order and requested a motion to approve the August 22, 2001 minutes as distributed. Motion for approval made by Todd, seconded by O'Donnell. Motion carried 4-0; Nelson, Laging, O'Donnell, and Todd voting 'yes', Kilgarin, Hunter, and Searcy absent.

Application by University of Nebraska - Lincoln for a Certificate of Appropriateness for work on and adjacent to Centennial Mall, between P and Q Streets, in the vicinity of Anderson Hall (formerly Security Mutual Insurance Building), in the Capitol Environs District.

Bergt explained that the University is proposing improvements to the property including the installation of two standard University of Nebraska signs next to the property lines in line with the building. Over a period of a few years, they will add plantings to enhance the entrance. They will also need to install bike racks at some point.

She met with Steve Schwab regarding the condition of the crab apple trees which are being crowded by the oak trees. The trees in question are on Mall property and the University is wondering if those and the junipers on the east edge of the Mall property could be taken out.

They plan to keep the yews around the building. The white rock and lava rock at the base of the building will be removed.

The University Sign Committee's determination is being held up until the new logo is decided upon.

They have not decided specifically what types of trees and shrubs will be used, but are planning to use a small low growing green mound that will grow in the shade. They are thinking about crab apple trees along perimeter. There was no landscaping money included in the budget for this. There is a partially functioning sprinkler system in place.

They are looking at 10' American Standard bike racks. There will be a University standard wooden trash container at each entrance.

Hunter suggested that this might be premature since a redesign of the Mall is being considered. Laging felt that since this is a master plan they could either approve the items behind the property line or approve the concept. Todd agreed that the Commission could approve the master plan, however the University would need to return to present a more detailed plan.

Schwab stated that replanting the crabs would be in line with master plan for the entire Mall.

With no one further appearing, the public hearing was closed.

Todd moved approval of the master plan with immediate implementation of bike loops on the Mall, a temporary sign, and plant removal with replacement turf and a return presentation to the Commission with specific planting and site details; seconded by Hunter. Motion carried 5-0; Nelson, Laging, O'Donnell, Hunter and Todd voting 'yes', Kilgarin and Searcy absent.

Application by Lincoln Parks & Recreation Department for a Certificate of Appropriateness for work on the public right-of-way of Lincoln Mall, between 10th & 14th Streets, within the Capitol Environs District.

Canney offered a brief history of the Mall, including its creation, and an inventory of the plant materials and benches along the Mall. Parks is of the opinion that the removal of the crab trees needs to be reconsidered. Clark Enerson has discussed replacing the plaques dedicating the Mall to Larry Enerson in some fashion. The historical value of the Mall needs to be kept in mind. The Mall was one of Enerson's last pieces and it should reflect his design influence. While it may not be necessary to preserve the Mall exactly as it is, the integrity of the design should be kept. It should remain an open space that is somewhat formal. The open vista should also be maintained.

Todd pointed out that there is a difference between keeping the Mall and keeping the crab apple trees in place. The significance is the Mall. Canney stated that the Mall is dedicated to Enerson. The crab apple trees are part of his era. There needs to be a bigger discussion about the direction the Mall takes.

Hunter indicated that the crab apple trees are not attractive and are a maintenance nightmare, however the intent of the redesign is not to create something Larry Enerson would not approve of. He believes that this project should be considered a rededication to him in a bigger and better way. He is of the understanding that the Mall was planted very rapidly and that no significance was put on the crab apple trees. He did not think that there would be any objection to the removal of the trees. He added that the project around the Governor's mansion and Capitol which involved the removal of trees has turned out to be far better than it was before.

Laging suggested that the Parks Department come back to the Commission with concrete proposals. He clarified that the design of the Mall was not specifically Larry Enerson's, it was the design of his office.

Schwab stated that there are 46 existing red jade crabs on the center medians of the Mall. Using the trunk formula method, those trees appraised at a total value of \$79,856. The cost of the maintenance of them is \$700, which is one complete trim by Parks. Lincoln is a Tree City USA, which means it takes a proactive

stand with its trees. The removal of healthy 18 year old trees before their time is not in keeping with a Tree City USA. Hunter was of the opinion that Parks does not maintain the trees in the City as well as they should.

Ripley indicated that the removal of trees is a sensitive issue. The reality is that sometimes healthy trees need to be removed in the overall scheme of things. A balance needs to be struck. Laging felt this discussion was premature as the removal of the trees might not even be an issue. This discussion is about improvements along the Mall. The removal of the trees is not even a concrete proposal at this point.

Seacrest appeared on behalf of NEBCO, who is proposing a new office building on Lincoln Mall. During that project review, there was a discussion of the bigger picture and the possibility of an update on Lincoln Mall. NEBCO would be willing to cooperate if the scale and scope are appropriate. The plan for the update should be respectful of the Goodhue and Enerson master plans. NEBCO is not willing to lead the charge, but they would give their support.

Todd stated that the purpose of this is to look at different landscape renovation options, not necessarily to cut down the trees. She believes that tree health in the City is really good for the most part, however is irritated by the damage being done to trees all over the City, for example the developer who dug the huge hole at the base of a red tree on South 70th Street.

Laging moved that the Commission has identified that Lincoln Mall needs refurbishing; that in reviewing and approving the NEBCO building proposal the Commission has discussed linking these Mall improvements, and that the Commission encourages the City to coordinate any redevelopment projects in the area with the Commission on behalf of the Lincoln Mall improvements in a timely manner, seconded by Hunter. Motion carried 5-0; Nelson, Laging, O'Donnell, Kilgarin and Hunter voting 'yes', Todd and Searcy absent.

Centennial Mall: Proposal for a redesign process

Laging explained that the College of Architecture has an agreement with the City to put together a proposal to reconsider the Centennial Mall redesign as a more viable project. He asked for the Commission's guidance on the project. His students will be doing some of the preliminary work prior to the charrette scheduled for November 1st. A concept of the redesign of the Mall will be developed from the information gathered at the charrette.

The Commission granted Laging's request to move the October meeting to November 7 to better coordinate with the charrette schedule.

Zimmer reminded that Commission that the combined meeting of the NCEC and Capitol Commission would be on December 13th at 9:00 am. The NCEC will meet that same day at 8:00 am.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:22 a.m.